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301123Z Mar 01

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	DOPE-00	SRPP-00	DS-00	EB-00	EUR-00	FAAE-00	FBIE-00
	VC-00	H-01	TEDE-00	INR-00	IO-00	LAB-01	L-00
	VCE-00	AC-01	NSAE-00	OIC-02	OMB-01	OPIC-01	PA-00
	PM-00	PRS-00	ACE-00	P-00	SP-00	STR-00	TRSE-00
	USIE-00	BBG-00	PMB-00	DSCC-00	PRM-01	DRL-02	G-00
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FM AMEMBASSY HARARE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8539
INFO NSC WASHDC
SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 HARARE 001177

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR AF/S (KRAFT), AF/PD (COX, HOWARD, SANDERS)

NSC FOR SENIOR AFRICA DIRECTOR JENDAYI FRAZER

LONDON FOR GURNEY

PARIS FOR BISA WILLIAMS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/30/11

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PROP](#) [PHUM](#) [KPAO](#) [PINR](#) [ZI](#)

SUBJECT: FIRED GOVERNMENT NEWSPAPER EDITOR DETAILS
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STATE'S PROPAGANDA EFFORTS

CLASSIFIED BY CHARGE D'AFFAIRES EARL M. IRVING FOR
REASONS 1.5 B/D.

1. (C) SUMMARY: IN AN HOUR-LONG MARCH 27 MEETING, THE RECENTLY FIRED EDITOR OF THE GOVERNMENT-OWNED DAILY "THE HERALD" SPOKE OPENLY ABOUT THE GOVERNMENT'S USE OF THE PAPER AS A PROPAGANDA TOOL. FORMER "HERALD" EDITOR RAY MUNGOSHI (35) (PROTECT) TOLD EMBOFF ABOUT DAILY HARASSMENT FROM INFORMATION MINISTER JONATHAN MOYO, THE MINISTER'S ACTIVE SUBVERSION OF HIS EDITORSHIP, THE MINISTER'S EFFORTS TO PLANT FALSE STORIES IN THE NEWSPAPER, CRUMBLING MORALE AT THE PAPER AND MUNGOSHI'S FEARS THAT MOYO'S DETERMINATION TO RUN THE PAPER WILL END UP DESTROYING IT. WHILE MUNGOSHI'S ACCOUNT LIKELY INCLUDED SOME EMBELLISHMENT OF HIS ROLE IN DEFENSE OF MEDIA FREEDOM, HIS ACCOUNT OF DIRECT CABINET-LEVEL INTERFERENCE IN THE NEWSPAPER RING THOROUGHLY TRUE. END SUMMARY.

2. (C) RAY MUNGOSHI'S EDITORSHIP OF THE GOVERNMENT-OWNED AND CONTROLLED "HERALD" LASTED ONLY 7 MONTHS. HE WAS APPOINTED EDITOR ON SEPTEMBER 15, 2000, AND SACKED ON MARCH 14, 2001. HE SUCCEEDED BORNWELL CHAKAODZA, WHO HAD BEEN EDITOR FOR TWO-AND-A-HALF YEARS. INFORMATION MINISTER JONATHAN MOYO SACKED CHAKAODZA FOR HIS ATTEMPTS TO REBUILD THE "HERALD'S" CREDIBILITY AFTER ITS SHAMELESSLY PARTISAN COVERAGE OF THE JUNE 2000 PARLIAMENTARY CAMPAIGN AND ELECTION. (NOTE: BETWEEN THE CONSTITUTIONAL REFERENDUM OF
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FEBRUARY 2000 AND THE PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION IN LATE-JUNE 2000, THE HERALD'S DAILY CIRCULATION PLUMMETED FROM ABOUT 80,000 TO ABOUT 40,000. CHAKAODZA'S EFFORTS TO IMPROVE THE EDITORIAL INTEGRITY OF THE PAPER WERE DRIVEN BY FINANCIAL AND BUSINESS NEEDS. HIS POLICIES DID SUCCEED IN RAISING THE CIRCULATION OF THE "HERALD" BACK TO AROUND 70,000 COPIES PER DAY. END NOTE)

3. (C) ACCORDING TO MUNGOSHI, HE ACCEPTED THE JOB DETERMINED TO CONSOLIDATE RECENT GAINS IN CIRCULATION AND KEEP THE "HERALD" FINANCIALLY VIABLE BY DEFENDING IT FROM GOVERNMENT INTERFERENCE. INITIALLY, HE SAID, ZIMPAPERS (THE HOLDING COMPANY FOR ALL GOVERNMENT-OWNED NEWSPAPERS) MANAGING DIRECTOR TOMMY SITHOLE SHIELDED HIM FROM THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION. THAT DID NOT LAST, HOWEVER, AND BY DECEMBER AND THE ZANU-PF PARTY CONGRESS, INFORMATION MINISTER JONATHAN MOYO CALLED MUNGOSHI ON AN ALMOST DAILY BASIS, USUALLY AT ABOUT 0600 IN THE MORNING. MUNGOSHI SAID THAT THESE

CALLS OFTEN LASTED 30 TO 45 MINUTES, AND WERE OFTEN ANGRY DIATRIBES ABOUT THE "HERALD'S" LACK OF SUPPORT FOR THE GOVERNMENT. MOYO ALSO USED THESE PHONE CALLS TO TELL MUNGOSHI WHAT THE NEXT DAY'S EDITORIAL SHOULD BE, OR WHAT STORY HE WANTED TO SEE ON THE FIRST PAGE. MUNGOSHI SAID THAT HE STOOD UP TO MOYO WHENEVER HE COULD, BUT CONFESSED THAT THE PRESSURE WAS SOMETIMES TOO MUCH AND HE WOULD "LIE LOW" FOR A WEEK OR TWO JUST TO STOP THE EARLY MORNING RANTING.

14. (C) MUNGOSHI ALSO TOLD US THAT MINISTER MOYO WOULD
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SEND READY-TO-PRINT STORIES TO THE PAPER AND EXPECT TO SEE THEM PUBLISHED WITHOUT QUESTION OR ALTERATIONS. HE DESCRIBED ONE SPECIFIC INCIDENT IN WHICH MOYO SENT A STORY ALLEGING THAT LEADING ZIMBABWEAN BUSINESSMAN STRIVE MASIYIWA (ECONET CELLULAR) WAS INVOLVED IN ILLEGAL FOREIGN EXCHANGE DEALINGS. MUNGOSHI, WHO KNOWS THE BORN-AGAIN CHRISTIAN MASIYIWA AND BELIEVES HIM TO BE AN HONEST, LAW-ABIDING MAN, DETAILED TWO REPORTERS TO CONFIRM THE DETAILS OF THE STORY. THE REPORTERS DETERMINED THAT THERE WAS NO BASIS TO THE STORY, SO MUNGOSHI REFUSED TO RUN IT. THAT DECISION PROMPTED A BARRAGE OF VERBAL ABUSE FROM MOYO, WHO APPARENTLY TOLD MUNGOSHI THAT HE HAD NO RIGHT TO QUESTION ANY STORIES MOYO WISHED TO HAVE PUBLISHED IN THE "HERALD."

15. (C) IN THE WAKE OF THE MASIYIWA INCIDENT, MUNGOSHI SAYS THAT HE BECAME ACCUSTOMED TO FINDING STORIES IN THE NEWSPAPER THAT HE HAD NEVER BEFORE SEEN OR APPROVED. MINISTER MOYO WENT DIRECTLY TO SUB-EDITORS AND PRODUCTION STAFF TO HAVE STORIES PLACED IN THE PAPER AFTER MUNGOSHI HAD APPROVED AN EDITION AND "PUT IT TO BED." MOYO'S BYPASSING OF MUNGOSHI HAD DISASTROUS RESULTS ON MORALE AT THE PAPER AND SEVERELY UNDERMINED WHAT MUNGOSHI SAYS WAS HIS DETERMINATION TO

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STATE'S PROPAGANDA EFFORTS

MAKE THE "HERALD" A PAPER "FOR ALL THE PEOPLE OF ZIMBABWE."

16. (C) TO HIS SURPRISE, MUNGOSHI WAS SELECTED BY MOYO TO BE ONE OF THREE JOURNALISTS TO INTERVIEW PRESIDENT MUGABE ON THE OCCASION OF THE PRESIDENT'S BIRTHDAY. THIS IS REGARDED AS AN HONOR RESERVED ONLY FOR THE MOST TRUSTED AND LOYAL JOURNALISTS. MUNGOSHI TOOK THIS AS A SIGNAL THAT MOYO HAD DECIDED TO CHANGE TACK AND ALLOW THE "HERALD" GREATER INDEPENDENCE. THREE WEEKS AFTER THE INTERVIEW, HOWEVER, MOYO DEMANDED MUNGOSHI'S RESIGNATION. MUNGOSHI REFUSED TO RESIGN AND MOYO PROMPTLY FIRED HIM. MUNGOSHI AND "SUNDAY MAIL" (ALSO GOVERNMENT-OWNED) EDITOR FUNNY MUSHAVA WERE FIRED ON THE SAME DAY, 10 DAYS AFTER MOYO SACKED

ZIMPAPERS MANAGING DIRECTOR SITHOLE. MINISTER MOYO REPLACED BOTH EDITORS WITH MEN KNOWN TO BE SYMPATHETIC TO THE MINISTER'S DESIRE TO USE THE GOVERNMENT-OWNED MEDIA AS A BLATANT PROPAGANDA INSTRUMENT.

17. (C) COMMENT: MUNGOSHI'S ACCOUNT OF HIS EDITORSHIP IS SOMEWHAT SELF-SERVING. HE PORTRAYS HIMSELF AS A BRAVE DEFENDER OF MEDIA INDEPENDENCE, BUT THE "HERALD'S" RECORD OF THE LAST 7 MONTHS DOES NOT OFFER MUCH EVIDENCE OF INDEPENDENT REPORTING. NONETHELESS, MUNGOSHI'S ACCOUNTS OF MINISTER MOYO'S HARASSMENT AND EVENTUAL DE FACTO EDITORSHIP OF THE PAPER RING TRUE. MUNGOSHI'S ACCOUNT CONFIRMS THE ARROGANCE AND DESTRUCTIVE DETERMINATION OF INFORMATION MINISTER

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JONATHAN MOYO TO USE THE GOVERNMENT-OWNED MEDIA IN ANY WAY HE CHOOSES TO PROMOTE PRO-GOVERNMENT PROPAGANDA AND LIES. MUNGOSHI'S EXPERIENCE ALSO CONFIRMS THE ENORMOUS POWER AND LATITUDE FOR ACTION INFORMATION MINISTER MOYO CURRENTLY HAS IN ZIMBABWE.

18. (C) COMMENT CONTINUED: MUNGOSHI IS REALISTIC WHEN IT COMES TO HIS OWN FUTURE IN ZIMBABWE: "I'M FINISHED AS A JOURNALIST IN THE COUNTRY," HE SAYS. "WHO WOULD HAVE ME NOW?" HE HAS TURNED DOWN REQUESTS FROM THE BBC AND SABC FOR INTERVIEWS ABOUT HIS EXPERIENCE AT THE "HERALD," PROBABLY WISE SINCE HE HAS A LAWYER WORKING FULL TIME TO "ASSESS THE QUANTUM OF THE DAMAGES" RELATED TO HIS FIRING. MUNGOSHI SAYS HE WOULD LIKE TO RETURN TO UNIVERSITY, GET A GRADUATE DEGREE IN JOURNALISM, AND PERHAPS BECOME A PROFESSOR OF JOURNALISM AT A ZIMBABWEAN UNIVERSITY. FOR THE TIME BEING, HE IS WORKING ON ENGINEERING THE LARGEST POSSIBLE SEVERANCE DEAL FROM ZIMPAPERS, AND BASKING IN THE PLEASURE OF PEACEFUL EARLY MORNINGS. END COMMENT.

IRVING

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